

See You Tomorrow by AlabasterInk

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Summary:

Mike, Lucas, and Dustin and the last words they said to their friend.

See You Tomorrow

Author's Note:

Hello! This is just a little fic meant to flesh out Mike, Lucas, and Dustin's decision to go out searching for Will at the end of the first episode. Frankly, the friendship between the four boys was my favorite part of the show. I figured their last interactions with Will would weigh heavily on them and thus this was born. I hope you all enjoy!

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

The last thing Mike said to Will hadn't even been a word.

It was a grunt – just one of those sounds disguised under the pretense of a word or question. He couldn't remember if it was a “huh?” or a “hmm?” or something else equally meaningless, but something about the fact that he couldn't even remember that much had to be telling. No goodbyes. No pats on the shoulder. No playful ribbing. Just a grunted question in the form of a not-quite-word that was somehow meant to be their last conversation.

“See you tomorrow!”

Will didn't lie. He didn't like them. Lonnie's half-truths and tall-tales and broken promises had left Will with an understandable dislike towards hiding anything more than a surprise party. By that logic, Will couldn't have lied. It was tomorrow and if Will wouldn't come to them then that just meant they had to go to him. It was simple. Perfectly simple and perfectly logical.

Mike absently twiddled with Will's game piece. It was still poised – waiting to see if the Demogorgon would get it or not.

“It was a seven.”

“Huh?”

“The roll, it was a seven. The Demogorgon. It got me.”

Rolling a seven wouldn't have given Will enough attack power to battle the Prince of the Underworld. He would have probably been better off with casting Protection, no matter that it would have undoubtedly ended with Lucas and Dustin getting caught. Now he was down leaving the rest of the party without their wizard.

"Huh?" (Or was it *"hmm?"* Some other unintelligible mumble?)

He hadn't even had time to realized what Will meant before the boy was disappearing down the road. Mike fiddled with the piece again. The somewhat musky scent of his basement infiltrated his nostrils unnoticed. He hesitated in tipping the little wizard over. Technically, he hadn't seen the roll.

"The Demogorgon. It got me."

Will had sacrificed himself to save the party. The likelihood of him making that roll had been low and he knew it. But he did it, because that was what Will did. He put his friends first.

Hopper's warnings and his mom's orders surfaced only briefly in Mike's mind before he batted them away with abandon usually reserved for swatting flies. Will could be hurt, and Hopper and his cops didn't know Will's hiding spots as well as his friends did. His mom could ground him later.

With deft fingers, Mike picked up the supercom situated atop the gaming table and clicked it on.

Will didn't lie, and Mike wasn't going to let him leave with anything less than a proper good-bye.

~*~*~*~*~*~*

The last thing Lucas said to Will had been a joke.

It hadn't even been directed at him – not really. It was a two-way thing; an off-handed jibe towards Dustin that doubled as a convenient good-bye to Will. He didn't know if it had made Will smile or laugh or shake his head, or even if Will had heard him at all. For all he knew his friend had just kept peddling without even realizing he'd said anything.

“Goodnight, ladies!”

He hadn't even said his name; just a joke, in the same way that they always joked before heading home. Why should he have done anything different? It wasn't like he could have known.

Known what? Lucas shook the thought from his head. Will was fine. Something had probably spooked him and he was just hiding. They'd find him – maybe a little hungry, maybe a little cold – but they'd find him.

Lucas had no reason to feel as if there was a black hole forming in his chest.

Bad things didn't happen in Hawkins.

“Goodnight, ladies!”

It was just a joke. Not even a real goodbye.

A joke.

So why did it feel like it hadn't been enough?

Lucas bit his lip and gripped the handlebars of his bike tightly. His pack weighed heavily on his back as he swung himself across the seat and quietly peddled his way out of the driveway. He kept one ear out for his mom just in case; the woman had the eyes and ears of a hawk.

“He put himself in danger to help the party.”

That was just like Will – always putting others before himself. The least Lucas could do was risk a grounding for him.

He directed his bike towards the end of the street where the dark outline of Mike's silhouette could only be seen if he squinted. For some reason, the shadow made his gut twist uncomfortably. He readily ignored the feeling as well as the smell of ozone that stung the air, and instead peddled faster.

“Dustin?” He asked as Mike came into range.

The other boy nodded, resolute. "Dustin."

He waited for Mike to take the lead before following closely behind. The knot grew in his stomach as they drew closer to Dustin's house, and Lucas fended it off as best he could.

This was Hawkins. Nothing bad happened in Hawkins. They'd find Will – maybe rib him a bit for making them all worry so much – and bring him back even if they all got grounded for it.

He didn't think about what would happen if they didn't.

~*~*~*~*~*~*

The last thing Dustin said to Will had been a threat.

It was so stupid, really. Will was the fastest out of the four even on a bad day. Making that bet had just been an adventure in defeat that Dustin should have seen coming. Offering up one of his comics – what was he thinking? Of course, he would lose.

"I'll take your X-Men 134!"

And of course it would be 134. Will had been trying to get his hands on that one ever since Dustin showed it to him. Honestly, he should have known better. But Will had the new *X-Men 174* and Dustin wanted it so badly he felt he could have won if only Will had let him say "go."

That two-second head-start Will had taken had left Dustin in the dust. He'd gotten so far ahead that the last image Dustin had of him was a small shadow vanishing down the road. He hadn't even reached his house before Will was gone.

"I'm gonna kill you!"

He hadn't meant it. It was just something people said. People say all sorts of things they don't mean.

"I'm gonna kill you!"

It was the last thing he told his friend. It might have even been the

last thing Will heard. Dustin could still remember what it was like living in the city. A new missing kid popped up on the news every week. He wasn't like Mike or Lucas who'd lived in a safe town all their lives; he knew there were people out there who targeted kids.

Had Will fallen prey to someone like that?

If they hadn't raced would Will have disappeared?

And then there was the thought that really hurt: was it his fault?

That thirty seconds they could have saved if they hadn't raced might have been the thirty seconds Will needed to make it home safely. It could have been a thirty second gap that stopped Will from running into whatever or whoever he ran into, and Dustin couldn't help the guilt that welled up inside him just thinking about it.

What if something bad *had* happened and the last thing Will ever heard was his friend threatening to kill him?

The X-Men comic burned against his back. Thunder rumbled overhead as if to warn them away, and Dustin couldn't help the way the hair on his arms stood on end. Something wasn't right, and as he followed Mike and Lucas through the undergrowth of Mirkwood the pit in his stomach grew. This whole situation was just too mental to be real.

"Will!" Mike shouted into the storm. "Will!"

"Byers!" Lucas followed.

"I've got your *X-Men 134!*" It sounded like a bribe. As if admitting his loss would make his friend appear. He'd made sure to put it in his backpack even before his snacks. Rules were rules, and Will *had* won the race. He'd earned the comic fair and square.

But the niggling feeling wouldn't leave him alone. It was as if something was breathing down his neck – something heavy that sent his skin crawling. Suddenly, the light from their flashlights didn't seem so comforting.

"I'm gonna kill you!"

And they couldn't help Will if they were dead.

Heavily, as if the words had physical weight, Dustin said, "Guys, I really think we should turn back." *I'm sorry, Will.*

He could only hope he wasn't condemning his friend to death.

~*~*~*~*~*~*

"See you tomorrow!"

It was in front of him. This *thing* – this *Demogorgon* come to life – was right in front of him and Will Byers couldn't move.

His fingers, already numb from cold, constricted around his mouth in an effort to stave off any sort of sound. The air around him was thick against his skin, its moldy scent burning the inside of his nose and making it hard to breathe. He'd long abandoned his rifle in the shed after the bullets failed to be anything other than a distraction. He didn't have the strength to carry it around and it would only slow him down.

A monster was hunting him.

He could see it; it was looking for him. Its faceless head swayed as it searched the nightmare-ish replica of his living room. The phone he'd tried to use to contact his mom lay swinging from the cord. It bounced – once, twice – against the wall, the rhythm proving a fortunate distraction for a monster who seemed to rely only on its sense of hearing.

It was a miracle it couldn't hear his heartbeat.

The monster's talons scraped against the floorboards, and every so often it let out a blood-chilling screech that had Will backing further into the corner. He wanted to run – knew he needed to run, but the fear was paralyzing. His joints had locked and his muscles were completely unresponsive.

Did he run and risk the monster hearing him, or stay and hope it didn't find him? Could he hide in the house or was it safer outside? Did he try and find someone, or keep them safe by staying away?

The questions swirled.

How did he get home? Was his family safe? Was this a nightmare or reality?

Will's hands shook as he slowly lowered them to graze along the vine-covered walls of his house. The slime was slick against his numb fingers, sending a shock throughout his body as if he'd dunked them in icy water. He closed his eyes, hoping that when he opened them he'd be home, but it wasn't to be. This was real. Will inhaled sharply.

It was the wrong thing to do.

The monster – the Demogorgon – whipped around, its face blooming into a razor-sharp sea of teeth. Its screech transformed into a roar, one that made Will break into a cold sweat as the acrid taste of bile gathered along his tongue. In the back of his head, he realized his body was teetering between the choices of passing out or vomiting. Neither of which would help him.

The Demogorgon advanced. Long limbs and piercing claws splayed in preparation for attack. Its muscles visibly tensed and Will realized then that his choices had narrowed.

Run or die.

“See you tomorrow!”

Will Byers ran.

Author's Note:

Thank you for reading!